

# ARMY TALKS



## THE NATURE OF A FREE MAN



**Restricted**

ARMY TALKS is a classified official publication of the United States Army in the European Theater of Operations. The material contained herein may not be quoted or republished, in whole or in part, nor may it be communicated, directly or indirectly, to persons not authorized to receive it, except by authority of the Commanding General, ETOUSA.

**EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES ARMY**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Nature of a Free Man .. .. .	5
Progress (Chart) .. .. .	10-11
Cartoon .. .. .	13
Preparation .. .. .	17
Questions .. .. .	18

---

**ARMY TALKS:**—The PURPOSE of ARMY TALKS is to help American officers and enlisted personnel become better-informed men and women and therefore better soldiers.

ARMY TALKS are designed to stimulate discussion and thought, and, by their very nature, thus may often be controversial in content. They are not to promote or to propagandize any particular causes, beliefs or theories. Rather, they draw upon all suitable sources for fact and comment, in the American tradition, with each individual retaining his American right and heritage so far as his own opinion is concerned.

THEREFORE, the statements and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily verified by, nor do they necessarily reflect the opinions of, the United States Army.

THE SOURCE OF MATERIAL must therefore be made clear at each discussion. All written material appearing in this publication has been written and edited by uniformed members of the Army and/or Navy, except where it is stated that a civilian or other outside source is being quoted.

## ***Introduction***

**T**HE other day in a British pub two Americans and half a dozen Englishmen were asking what is the most deadly error of the modern world. Among all our faults and mistakes, which has done most to bring us to our present plight? We have had a world war, and then a few years of lop-sided prosperity, and then the greatest of economic depressions, and then another world war. It seems that we could not have run into so much trouble by accident ; we must have done something to deserve it.

Everyone in the pub agreed that we have been failing to take freedom seriously, failing to see that it is not merely a pleasure to be enjoyed but a responsibility to be shouldered. Why have we been failing?

The two Americans thought we had been misled by the idea of inevitable progress, the idea that there is a law of nature to the effect that as the centuries pass the world tends to get better. Such an idea is an invitation to irresponsibility, to lying down on the job.

If the world is becoming better, inevitably and without our efforts, why should we bother to be good citizens? Why should we face the harsh fact that our own world, in our own lifetimes, has shown many disagreeable signs of becoming worse?

If progress is a law of nature, life ceases to be a moral struggle and becomes a matter of waiting in a railway station for the next train. If we miss the 4.30, that may be a nuisance ; but why bother, since there's always the 5.18? Why assume responsibility for being on time?

But suppose there isn't any 5.18? Suppose there is only the 4.30, and if we lose that we lose all?





**T**he Eyes of Christendom are  
upon us, and our Honor as a  
People is become a matter of the  
Utmost Consequence to be taken  
care of. If we give up our Rights  
in this Contest, a Century to come  
will not Restore to us the Opinion  
of the World; we shall be Stamped  
with the Character of Poltroons &  
Fools. Present Inconveniences  
are, therefore, to be Borne  
with Fortitude, and  
Better Times  
expected.

*Benjamin Franklin*

# ARMY TALKS

## EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

### THE NATURE OF A FREE MAN

**I**N 1919 President Woodrow Wilson began a speaking tour across America. He wanted to take to the people his defense of the League of Nations and his plans for world peace. Half-way through his tour he had a stroke from which he never recovered. In one of his last speeches before he broke down Wilson said:

"My clients are the children. My clients are the next generation. They do not know what promises and bonds I undertook when I ordered the armies of the United States to the soil of France; but I know, and I intend to redeem my pledges to the children. They shall not be sent upon a similar errand."

#### Here We Are Again

Well, here you are, the American army of 1944. You are the children. And you have been sent upon a similar errand.

The most important question today is "Why?" Why has it happened so soon again? Why did we refuse to listen to the warnings of Wilson and of all the others—politicians, historians, journalists—who told us what was coming?

We cannot dodge the question by saying that the Germans and the Japanese made the war. Of course they did; but why did we let them? In the days when this war was boiling up we were strong and they were weak. Yet we sat stupidly by until they almost killed us. Why?

We Americans were not the only blind men. One by one the free nations let themselves be murdered, or be brought to the edge of the grave. Yet until the eleventh hour they were strong, if they chose to act together.

#### We Let Axis Get Away With Murder

As recently as the fatal year 1936, the allies who are now fighting to save the world possessed overwhelming power as compared with the Axis. At the beginning of that year our enemies were scared of us. At the end of that year they held us in a natural but unwise contempt.

In 1931, we had allowed the Japanese to go into Manchuria, saying in effect that it was none of our business what happened to the Chinese. In 1935 we had let the Italians go into Ethiopia, saying in effect that it was none

*Herbert Agar, author of this issue of ARMY TALKS, served in the U.S. Navy during the last war, was a foreign correspondent, and later edited the Louisville, Ky., "Courier-Journal." He is the author of several books on American history. Holding the rank of Lieutenant-Commander, U.S.N.R., he is at present on inactive duty as a Special Assistant to the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, and advisor on U.S. Army Education Program.*



of our business what happened on a remote African plateau. That was foolish enough. But in 1936 we let the German army reoccupy the Rhineland, saying in effect that whoever was bold enough to assert his will by violence would find us reluctant to strike back.

## Could Have Said 'No'

By throwing the Chinese and the Ethiopians to the wolves we betrayed our sense of justice—and those who were members of the League of Nations betrayed their promise. By allowing the German army to return to the Rhineland we betrayed the simplest rules of self-interest. The remilitarization of the Rhineland changed the strategic map of Europe. With German soldiers on

the Rhine, France could no longer take help to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia or Rumania—all at that

time her allies. The Maginot Line was no longer a base for an offensive. It was a wall behind which to hide.

The nations which have at last come together today, under the threat of death, had only to say "no" to Japan or to Italy or to Germany between 1931 and 1936. But we wouldn't admit we were in danger. Especially to us Americans, the idea of danger seemed absurd. Yet four years and two months after Hitler occupied the Rhineland he murdered France. Four years and six months after Hitler occupied the Rhineland he almost murdered our civilization.

We don't like to remind ourselves of this, but in August and September of 1940 our world would have died

if there had been a few less young men in the RAF, a few less airplanes and mechanics in the British Isles. It wasn't smart of us Americans who had the power, who had a noble country to defend and the means for defending it, to let our fate hang on a few young Englishmen.



If England had fallen in the summer of 1940, who would have stopped the barbarians from plundering the world? We were not ready to meet them in America. We now know that less than 200 Japanese planes, thousands of miles from home, could put a large part of the American navy out of action for most of a year. We now know it was as foolish to think we could hide behind our two oceans as for the French to think they could hide behind their Maginot Line.

## Our American Way Would Have Been Lost

The best we could have hoped for would have been to fight an endless war against the resources of an enslaved world, a world mobilized and led by implacable slave-drivers who had announced many times that they hated and despised our country. Even if by a miracle we had held them at bay, all present hopes for our American way of life would have been dead.

Shall we forget this when the war is over? Shall we return to the pre-war theory that neither honor nor self-interest need move us until the enemy is in our back yard? If so our children—the children of you men of the American army in ETO today—will once more be "sent upon a similar errand."



## SUMMARY

*The main question is why did world war recur so soon? Rather than take a firm stand with the aggressor nations the democracies sacrificed China, Ethiopia and Czechoslovakia. As late as 1936 the power of the now United Nations would have easily checked the Axis if they had acted together. The reoccupation of the Rhineland, and the advance of the Axis policy*

*of piecemeal aggression strengthened the fascist nations until the large democracies were in serious peril.*

**What did President Wilson mean when he said his clients were the children?**

**Why did the democracies fail to say NO! to Japan in 1931 or to Italy in 1935?**

**How did the German reoccupation of the Rhineland change the strategic balance in Europe?**

# Freedom Earned, Not Inherited

**We took freedom for granted. Forgot its continuous fight to be free. Progress takes effort. We didn't look, we didn't even listen.**

The Golden Rule suggests that morals and true self-interest are likely to coincide. If we treat other nations right, we not only become better people, but we increase the chance of being treated right ourselves. But whichever standard we choose, whether we judge by morals or by self-interest, our conduct between the two wars was folly. What had we done, to become so blind? How had we gone wrong, to become so callous?

## Liberty Is Easily Lost

Perhaps the greatest of our faults was to forget that it is not easy to be a free man. It is fatally easy to be a slave, desperately hard to earn what our American Constitution calls "the blessings of liberty."

Men have always wanted to be free; to be their own masters, make their own choices, win their own way in the world. Yet in the stormy history of the last three

thousand years freedom has been won seldom, and unless we of the modern world prove an exception it has never been preserved. It is the light toward which man eternally gropes; yet when he grasps it he seems to put it out.

Our modern effort to win freedom came to a head in the eighteenth century, with the American and the French revolutions. Free institutions spread through Western Europe, and we Americans carried them across our continent to the Pacific Ocean. For about 150 years western man knew freedom; and then in 1940 he almost destroyed it.

One reason he almost destroyed it is that he came to take it for granted. He forgot that freedom has to be earned all over again each day. He treated it as if it were something that can be inherited, like a strong body, and then neglected. He treated it as if his ancestors who had won it, and handed it on, had also set up a spendthrift fund to





keep him from frittering it away! But one of the attributes of freedom is that whoever has it is free to lose it.

It was the belief in inevitable progress which helped us to come so close to losing our freedom. Having taught ourselves that the future always tends to be better than the present, and the present better than the past, we were not prepared to believe that our own future looked grim beyond describing, that our own present was far more dangerous and insecure than our immediate past. Men who will not believe the facts cannot act responsibly. So we almost died of optimism.

### It's Easy To Slip

The truth is that the world naturally gets worse unless man strives incessantly to hold the advances he has made. Progress is the result of an immense effort of the human will. The minute a nation relaxes it begins to go backward. And the first sign of the decline is that man becomes less free.



When men who have inherited freedom take it easy and behave irresponsibly, they start down the slippery hill toward slavery. Slavery

is the irresponsible man's fate. Slavery is what happens to people who don't work hard enough, think hard enough, to keep free.

Remember the America of the long armistice, between the two world wars. Were we taught that we had to take jealous care of our system of free government to prevent it from decaying under our eyes? Most of us assumed that our free government existed like our climate, that it always would exist, and that we needn't do anything about it except make occasional sarcastic remarks about politicians.



Were we taught that our world was a dangerous planet, a volcano which might explode politically at any moment? Most of us assumed that our own part of the world was so safe that we could ignore the rest of the globe. We were like first-class passengers on the sun deck of a luxury liner who refused to believe that it was any of their affair if the men below were incompetent, or near to mutiny.

### Wilson Was Unheeded

Do you remember how we treated our leaders who warned us of the coming horror? Woodrow Wilson worked himself to death to warn us, and although we were sorry for his personal tragedy we thought he was a little ridiculous for taking life so seriously.

As late as 1937, when the Germans were back in the Rhineland, when disaster was around the corner, the President of the United States tried



to warn us in the famous "quarantine speech" in Chicago. He told us that unless we banded together against the aggressor nations those nations would soon be at our throats. We said he was a scaremonger. We said he was trying to distract our attention from domestic troubles by showing us a bogey-man abroad.

## We Shut Our Eyes To Creeping Lava

We Americans weren't the only backward citizens. The rest of the free peoples in the Western world were just as dull. They have paid a more terrible price. They lived higher on the slopes of the volcano; they were the first to perish under the rain of fire. But did we pay heed, we who lived only a little lower on those same slopes? We said, "It's rather warm, isn't it?" We said, "The air seems a trifle dusty." And we said, "It will surely blow over."

One by one, ten nations on the continent of Europe were killed. In Asia the Chinese were ravaged by the Japs. In the whole world there was only the British Empire between us and the barbarian. And still we told ourselves that we were safe, that we were at peace, that if we kept quiet nothing bad would happen.



We were like grown-up children, playing at house-keeping, forgetting that we were middle-aged, that our

parents had died years ago, and that if we were to have a house to keep we must earn it in a harsh world and hold it by our daily labor.

The hardest task is to be free men. We were behaving as if it were the easiest task, as if freedom came to us by divine right.

## SUMMARY

*If England had fallen in 1940, America would not have been able to face the Axis alone. We were unprepared. Our conduct between the two wars was folly. We took freedom for granted. When a nation relaxes, it begins to go backwards. Americans refused to believe in danger. Even when ten nations on the continent of Europe were killed, one by one, we refused to learn from their example. They had made the same mistakes we made after World War I. They paid a more terrible price for those mistakes simply because they lived closer to the aggressor nations.*

**Why did America feel so safe from aggression for so long?**

**If the present generation of Americans had had to win freedom, would they have been likely to take it more seriously?**

**What was the famous "quarantine speech" about?**

**Why did President Wilson try to promote a better understanding of America's allies?**



## We're Getting Another Chance

**Mechanical progress deluded us. We thought war futile. But war decides which side gets chance to make the world it wants.**

One reason for our delusion that the world would somehow go on getting better, even if we did nothing to make it better, was because we were born at the end of a long period of mechanical progress. In the eighteenth century in England a few men made a few basic inventions out of which the whole of modern technology has grown. From that time our world has never looked back, mechanically.

### Machines Improve

Every decade has seen new marvels. Every generation has produced greater revolutions in man's habits of life, greater advances in his control over nature, than were previously seen in a thousand years.

It was quite true that most of us could lie back and do nothing while a few men would produce more and more mechanical triumphs for our convenience and our amusement. Perhaps it was natural for us to assume that this in itself was the essence of progress and that henceforth we could behave irresponsibly without bringing our world to ruin.

### Our Big Mistake

Even if the assumption was natural, it was nevertheless disastrous. Progress in civilization, progress in freedom and justice and respect for one's neighbor, cannot be produced by pieces of machinery.

The machinery can make it easier for man to provide economic justice, easier for man to raise his standards

of living to the point where he can enjoy life. The machinery can be a superb tool for carrying out real progress. It can also be a superb tool for carrying out the decline and fall of civilization.

Hitler has told us that the technological means are now available for one master race to enslave the world. He has done more than tell us; he has come very close to showing us. That is one use to which the machine may be put. It is the use to which it most certainly will be put if we win

this second world war and then go back to sleep, as in 1919.

If we think we can win freedom on the battle-field, once and for all, and then do nothing but have fun with our automobiles and our airplanes and our other toys, we shall be back in the midst of this danger and death by the time the children of today are big enough to fight.

Modern technology is neither a blessing nor a curse. It is something to use for good or ill, according to our own free choice. It creates evil temptations because, as Hitler says, it gives to a group of brutal men a chance to enslave their neighbors. It also creates opportunities for good because it makes possible a rise in man's standard of life, a rise in man's chance for happiness and hope.

### Harms Automatically








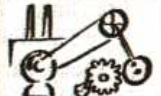










The trouble is that technology will only help us if we devote our lives to making it help us, whereas it will harm us automatically. It will harm us the minute we take life easily, the minute we persuade ourselves that because we have won another war we can again become self-seeking and negligent.

We have inherited a vast wealth in horse-power, in potential energy. Such wealth is a frightening responsibility, for we must work hard and plan well to keep our machines usefully busy, otherwise they will go wrong and destroy us.

### What War Means

During the years between Hitler's invasion of Poland and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, when we Americans were telling ourselves that the ostrich and not the eagle was the King of birds, we kept repeating the phrase, "War settles nothing." It was a comforting phrase, because if

## OUR TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS AND ITS USE IN PEACE AND WAR

1790	1940		MODERN WAR
		Transportation	
		Communications	
		Industry	
		Shipping	
		Building	
		Agriculture	

**Tabulate the items above on a blackboard; show similar developments in science, medicine and education. Discussion can be stimulated by conducting this in form of a quiz. What were the implements of, say, industry in 1790 and in 1940, and how are they used in modern war?**

**Questions for the discussion: How can we make sure that technological progress goes hand in hand with progress in civilization, in freedom, justice and respect for one's neighbor. In what way can we make the best of our machine age and combine it with liberty and peace?**



war settles nothing there was clearly no reason why we should go to war. But "war settles nothing" is only the reverse of the folly of 1919: that everything would be all right because we had won the war. This was a way of saying that war settles everything. The Germans were beaten so we had done our job, hadn't we? We could go home and neglect our world-duties to our hearts' content, couldn't we?



Having discovered that war doesn't settle everything, we turned the idea inside out and decided that it settles nothing. The one attitude is as irresponsible as the other. In both cases we gave ourselves an excuse for doing nothing except look after our own private selfish affairs.

War always settles exactly what it is intended to settle—but no more. War settles which side is to have a chance to get its own way. It doesn't settle that the victorious side will have sense enough and energy enough to take advantage of that chance.

War settles exactly what it is intended to settle—but no more. War settles which side is to have a chance to get its own way. It doesn't settle that the victorious side will have sense enough and energy enough to take advantage of that chance.

In 1783, war settled that we had a chance to get out of the British Empire and set up an independent state. We took the chance, and built America. In 1918, war settled that we had a chance to help our neighbors build a world where there would be more peace, less international anarchy. We didn't take the chance, so we very nearly lost America. Within the next few years war will settle that we are offered that chance for a second time. It will be up to each one of us to decide whether we take that second (per-

haps the last) chance, or whether we again neglect it. No other decision of our lifetimes will be so important.

These are some of the reasons why it is vital for free men to know what they are fighting for. Our enemies can fight in ignorance because they are fighting for purely physical aims—for land, for plunder, for victory. When they have conquered on the field of battle they have done their job. But free men cannot fight in ignorance because when they have won victory they have only begun their job. There remains the unending task of making use of victory, of building a world in which freedom can survive. All they can win on the battle-field is the opportunity to build that world. This is merely another way of saying that it is hard to be free, easy to be unfree.

If we never forget this fact we shall never again expect to enjoy freedom without earning it, never again believe that life gets better of its own accord. But it won't be easy to be wise, especially in the first days after the shooting stops.

## SUMMARY

*Born in an age of constant and great mechanical progress, we developed the delusion that the world automatically improves with the passage of time. We mistook mechanical triumphs for the essence of world progress. This conception was disastrous. Machine progress has very nearly been the tool for carrying out the destruction of civilization. We excused our aloofness from the war before Pearl Harbor with the phrase, "War settles nothing." In reality, war settles which side shall have a chance to get its own way. We*



**BATTLE OF ALL HISTORY***"Evening Standard"*

*muffed the opportunity to use victory in 1919 for world good.*

**How is it that machine progress can be both good and dangerous? Does it give us a**

**greater pride in service and sense of personal participation in the war to know what we are fighting for? What are the enemy's war aims?**

## **Temptations of Armistice Day**

**This time we must grasp the chance our victory gives. Remember what last mistake cost. Behave like free men.**

Anyone who lived through the last war will know the longing to forget which comes to all fighting men on armistice day. It won't be easy to resist that longing. It won't be easy to go back home ready to take up a struggle which is in some ways as hard as the war itself, because it goes on for ever. The

pain and loneliness of war can be born because there is always an end in sight. This year, next year, some day soon, it will be over. But there can be no end to the task of living in such a way as to preserve our free life and to enjoy liberty at home and peace abroad and a chance to make the best of our machine age.

It won't be the fighting men alone who will be tempted to forget the meaning of the war on armistice day. The civilians will have the same temptation. We shall all want to

forget together, to pretend that there is nothing left to do except have fun and that "the state" in some mysterious way can provide us with security. But the state is nothing but ourselves, working together. That fact, again, is one of the burdens of freedom.

## Do We Want Naziism?

If we lived in a Nazi world the state would be an overlord which gave us orders and which took care of us so long as we obeyed the orders quietly. If we were content to have security on those terms there would have been no point in fighting the Axis.

All that our enemies wanted to do was to conquer our country, kill our leaders, and put the rest of us to work for a world-slave-society. They might have provided total employment; the Germans are excellent organizers.

We might all have had jobs, and enough to eat and drink. But we would have had no hope, no opportunity, no nation to be proud of, no soul to call our own. So we preferred to fight, in order to save our nation and to win the chance to assume the duties and the pleasures of free men.

## We Must Remember Lesson Of Last War

Yet having fought and won we shall be greatly tempted to deny those duties, while indulging those pleasures. Our best hope of resisting the temptation is to remember the story of the past 25 years.

We are lucky, in a sense, to have a story with so clear a moral right before our eyes. It is as if fate had decided to give us a lesson which no one could misunderstand. In 1918 it was relatively easy to think that

by winning the war we and our allies had finished the job. Now we have seen what happens to people who make that mistake. We have done more than see it; we have lived it and suffered it and many of our friends and relatives have died from it. If we repeat the mistake history will record that we were not fit to be free.

What do we do to avoid repeating the mistake? One thing we can do is to insist on remembering the



nature, and the terrible cost, of the mistake. Another thing is to train ourselves to the discipline of democratic life.

## Democracy The Answer

Democracy assumes that men are sensible enough and good-hearted enough to learn from each other. It assumes that when free citizens get together to argue a question of national policy they won't get so angry and intolerant that each man closes his mind and refuses all ideas except his own. Democracy also assumes that people will take the trouble to come together for such argument, for the pooling of experience and for the hammering out of basic agreements on which common policy can rest.

We know from our national history that these assumptions are not unrealistic. We know they can be made to come true when people care enough. We don't know whether we, the people who have America in our charge during our lifetime, are prepared to care enough. If we don't we shall become the helpless dupes of



demagogues: radio demagogues, press demagogues, mass-orator demagogues.

We can save ourselves from the demagogues by learning to take part in democratic policy-making—beginning with small groups of citizens meeting to learn from each other, to inform each other, to discover where they need to look for special information or guidance if they are to behave like free men.

## We As Soldiers Can Train For Democracy

In the American army in ETO, and in the British army, such meetings are being held even in wartime. Soldiers are meeting together and arguing together and training themselves in the discipline of democracy. Is there any reason why they should not carry back into civilian life the habit and the technique of such meetings?

Every community in the country could make itself immune to demagogues by such meetings, immune to the unthinking ebb and flow of mass emotion out of which nothing can come but disorder and selfish demands. Every community could make itself capable of trying to act in terms of the national interest. The whole tone of our democracy could be improved.

Policy in America is determined by what the people support. Much can be done by brave leadership; but we shall stand or fall finally by the number of plain citizens who take their

country and its problems and its honor and its duties seriously.

## It Is Up To Us

"We become what we do." That is a trite copybook maxim; but it happens to be true. The way we think and act today will decide what sort of America we leave to our children tomorrow.

If we are intolerant we help to build an undemocratic America. If we are anti-Semitic we help to build an America with some of the vices of the Nazis. If we are suspicious of our allies, believing that their motives are less good than our own, we help to build an America which cannot play a constructive part in the future.

## We Need To Trust As Well As Beware

Man cannot live by suspicion alone. It is all very well to be realistic about our own interest; but if we want a world in which progress really exists, in which good-will increases, and thus the chance for happiness, we shall have to learn that trust is as important as watchfulness.

In the jungle watchfulness alone will suffice; in heaven, trust alone. But the life of man lies somewhere between. It is part of the responsibility of freedom to remember that most of our fellow-men would like to live decently, while never forgetting that some of them prefer to live like beasts of prey. If we cannot hold these two ideas simultaneously, if we cannot live them both at the same time, there is no reason to believe that we can progress or that we can remain free.





## SUMMARY

*Armistice day will bring the desire to forget and to relax. Yet we must be prepared to continue the struggle to preserve freedom and peace, a struggle which has no end. The moral of the past twenty-five years is clear. We must not repeat the mistake of believing that the mere winning of the war finishes our job. Our immediate task in America after the war is to adhere to the democratic principle of open-mindedness, and to exercise the democratic rights. We must fear false leadership and false ideas.*

*We must accept the obligation of freedom.*

Why is the Nazi type of "security" hateful to men who have known freedom in the democratic sense? Is it desirable for people in a democracy to get together to discuss the causes and progress of the war? Is the Army discussion group an example of the democratic system of free thought and free expression at work? Does an understanding of our mistakes after the last war increase one's interest in current events and their relation to the present war and the establishment of peace?





# Preparation

**T**HE penalty of losing the war is immediate and dramatic. The penalty of fumbling the peace may be paid a generation later. It is fatally easy for tired people to say, "We have done enough. Let us go home and live softly." Like Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone with the Wind" it is easy to say, "I will not think of this today. I will think of it tomorrow." To be free men is a constant struggle demanding endurance and courage and great vision. All men must live hard lives in order to live free lives. We can meet that obligation today. Tomorrow may be too late.

You, the discussion leader, with your men can tackle this problem NOW in your next session. In this article Herbert Agar outlines the challenge. He indicates that the discussion group is one of democracy's most valuable tools. Here is your chance to practice what he is preaching. It is not an easy job. Working with ideas is always more difficult than working with facts or things. Yet men have died, been enslaved, and towns and nations destroyed because the democratic world for a time gave up certain ideas. No, it is not an easy job. But making democracy work is never easy.

While this assignment demands much, it can be done. We Americans like to talk in or out of the army. You have heard your buddies stage bull-sessions in the barracks, Aero Clubs and pubs. It is a deep-rooted American habit which is as old as the New England town meeting and the Virginia House of Burgesses. It is carried on around the stove in the country store and on the 5.15 suburban train. This article provides you with some of the best available thinking and writing on the subject.

Take time to read the issue thoroughly. You cannot handle this job with a quick five-minute survey just before the meeting. See that selected members of your group have a chance to do likewise. If your section is a little slow in getting started arrange in advance for several members to be ready with provocative questions to get the ball rolling. Create an informal atmosphere. Make the men as comfortable as your facilities permit. Let them smoke if it is not against post policy. As chairman you will want to see that democracy is not only talked about but practiced in this meeting. Everyone should have a chance to state his views but no one should be allowed to dominate the floor. Tolerance for the other fellow's opinion must be encouraged and a friendly give-and-take spirit maintained. Do not allow side issues to take you too far from the topic. There is plenty of material in the subject itself.

Here are a few questions which may help in getting started. If you can set up others which will be more suitable for your unit you should do so.



## QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

### **What is the main thing we are fighting for ?**

There is no sense in saying wars settle nothing, since wars have usually settled what they were intended to settle—and no more. This war is being fought to give the United Nations an opportunity to have again what they refused in 1919—the chance to build courageously a free world.

### **What will be the temptations of Armistice Day ?**

Many of us will expect to go home as heroes, to be coddled and treasured from any more serious work for the rest of our lives. That will be the temptation and that will be the test of American manhood. We must have the lean, hard nerve and courage to leave this fight for as tough and as strenuous a fight at home. The fight to maintain the hard way of life. The free way.

### **Can we avoid repeating the mistakes made before ?**

Many blunders have been made in the period between the two wars. Fortunately we have been given a second chance. The very nature of democracy throws the burden of making or refusing to make the same mistake again on the brain and muscle of every single American—man and woman, soldier and WAC, riveter and office worker. It is going to require sound thinking, careful study and endless effort to regain and keep a world worth living in. Let's think it out and talk it out together. Americans, British, French, and Russians.

### **Why is the efficient and responsible soldier more likely to be a responsible world citizen than "Sloppy Joe" ?**

Habits are formed in the army which will be carried over to civilian life. The good soldier who regularly reveals his pride in service and confidence in leadership by carrying out orders and policies in the most intelligent and responsible way is building the sort of habits which make for good citizenship. Duty is important to both the good soldier and the good citizen. In the post-war years an understanding of other peoples and world problems will be more important than ever



before. The good soldier of today is preparing for that period by using his overseas service as an opportunity for understanding our allies and their problems..

**What does the following calendar of events suggest about democratic responsibility in the last quarter century ?**

1919—United States refuses to enter the League of Nations.

1922—Mussolini's Fascist government replaces Italian parliamentary government.

1931—Japs enter Manchuria.

1935—Italians attack Ethiopia.

1936—Germans reoccupy the Rhineland.

1936-38—Fascists support Franco in Spain.

1938—Germans seize Austria and Czechoslovakia.

1940—R.A.F. saves Great Britain and the U.S. from Nazi conquest.

1941—200 Jap planes seriously damage U.S. Pacific fleet.

#### **DISCUSSION LEADERS :**

**ARMY TALKS** is **YOUR** handbook, to assist you in conducting your weekly group discussions. If you have any suggestions as to how it can serve you better—suggestions as to topics, presentation of the material, preparation and questions—let us hear from you. Send your letters to **ARMY TALKS**, Special Service Division, ETO, APO 887, U.S. Army.



# Army Talks

**WAS ESTABLISHED TO INSTILL IN ALL  
MILITARY PERSONNEL THE FOLLOWING**



**1 Confidence in the Command.**



**2 Pride in service and a sense of  
personal participation.**



**3 Knowledge of the causes and  
progress of the War.**



**4 A better understanding of our  
Allies.**



**5 An interest in current events  
and their relation to the war  
and the establishment of the peace.**